THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, the 1st March 1963.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the Clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR. P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION ON THE DEATH OF DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD, FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is my sad and sorrowful duty to announce to the House the death of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, at 10–15 p.m. yesterday in Patna.

Born on December 3, 1884, at Ziradei in the Saran district of Bihar, Dr. Rajendra Prasad went to school at Chapra and proved a great success and stood first in the entrance examination of the Calcutta University. He continued his studies in the Presidency College, Calcutta, and stood first in the Intermediate and B.A. examinations. Even at this early stage of his life, he participated in social welfare actitivities and in the student movement. In 1906 he became an active worker in politics and served as a volunteer at the historic Congress held at Calcutta which was presided over by Dadabhai Naorojee. A year later he passed his M.A. Examination in English and joined the Greer College at Muzaffarpur. Later, he joined the legal profession. In 1910, he joined the Servants of India Society at the invitation of Gopala Krishna Gokhale. On the establishment of the Patna High Court, he began to practise in his home State and soon established his reputation. He joined the first satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi at Champaran in Bihar and became an ardent and loyal lieutenant of Gandhiji. Since then, he was in the fore front of every national movement for Indian Independence. He was twice President of the Indian National Congress. The great relief work organised by him during the 1934 Bihar earthquake was a marvel of zeal and organisational capacity.

In 1946, he was unanimously elected President of the Constituent Assembly and the manner in which he conducted the proceedings with fairness and integrity were greatly appreciated.

In 1950, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the first President of India and continued as such till May 12, 1962.

Dr. Prasad enthroned himself in the hearts of the people by his simplicity, sincerity of conviction and purpose, deep devotion to duty, selfless service in the cause of the nation and the people, his religious piety, humility and integrity of character. He preserved always a singular equanimity of thought and action. In the words of his biographer " possessed a genious without pride, power with charm and a style of tought bereft of mental poise."

Dr. Prasad was a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and truth and non-violence remained the sheetanchor of his life. In his death. the nation has lost a great and distinguished son.

I now move the Condolence Resolution :

" This House places on record its profound sense of sorrow at the demise of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India from January 26, 1950, till May 12, 1962 and conveys its deep sense of sympathy to the members of the bereaved family."

The Hon. Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will speak on the resolution.

* THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Mr. Chairman, it is my melancholy duty to associate this House with the sentiments of sorrow so movingly expressed by you. Dr. Rajendra Prasad is one of our emient statesmen who helped to liberate this country, to establish it on a firm footing of democracy and freedom and guided its destinies in the most difficult period of its existence. He combined in him great virtues, the virtue of humility, the virtue of dedication to service and above all the virtue of self-less service to humanity at large. It is needless to say how much the country has suffered owing to the demise of one of our elder statesmen. When we pass resolutions of this kind, it is not so much to pay tributes to the glorious life of the departed leaders, but to instil in ourselves a desire to follow the footsteps of the great leaders and emulate them in ever so humble a form in the practice of the virtues which they all possessed.

Sir, Dr. Rajendra Prasad entered public life at a time when membership of the Congrees was no bed of roses. It did not offer at that time membership to the legislatures, Councils and Cabinets. It offered at that time only tears and toil, sweat and sorrow. The only respite from work which the great servants of the Congress had during the troublesome time was the respite they had in prison for the terms which they were set. At that time, a man of such eminent qualification, a man who had stood high and first in every one of the University examinations that he took, a man who had a very prosperous and brillant career in front of him, a person whose abilities as a successful lawyer were recognised threw away all the great advantages that he possessed, and sacrificed his entire life for the future of the country. Sir, it is this spirit that we have to catch now. We have to dedicate ourselves to this great task of serving this country, and in this dedication we have to see that no idea of any personal profit or personnal advancement comes in, and that whatever is required for the country's sake is willingly and voluntarily surrendered.

Sir, I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and one thing which struck me was the extraordinary humility that he possessed. Though he held the highest office in this country,

1st March 1963] [Sri R. Venkataraman]

though he was the first citizen of this country, he would talk to every humble citizen of this country as his equal. Not only would he do so, but he had the extraordinary capacity to make the other man feel that he was talking to a person of equal status. The humility which he displayed on occasions when there were heated debates in the Constituent Assembly really smoothened the process of arriving at conclusions. But for his extraorinary tact, extraordinary humility and extraordinary reasonableness, the scenes of the Constituent Assembly would have been fraught with more violent punctuations.

Sir, the country has lost a great leader at a time when his wise counsel would be most useful and helpful. The country which is now going through the throes of an emergency looks up to its elder statesmen to give the proper guidance so that we may be able to face the heavy odds that we have to do. And in this we have lost the services of an eminent elder statesman, a man whose wisdom could have been of immense help to us. We can only hope that a great life as that of Dr. Rajendra Prasad will leave indelible impacts in the history of this country for others to enulate and to follow. May his soul rest in peace.

SRI K. BALASUBRAMANYA AYYAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I heartily associate myself with all the sentiments that you have expressed and the sentiments that the Leader of the House has expressed. Our loss is immense and our grief is very immediate. Words fail us really to express our profound sense of sorrow at the passing away of one of the greatest men that India has produced. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was devoted to our Dharma. He was one of the trust disciples of Mahatma Gandhi. If Mahatma Gandhi was alive to-day, he would have felt the greatest sorrow at the passing away of one of his foremost disciples. In fact, after his retirement. Dr. Rajendra Prasad wanted to devote his whole time to Sarvodaya work. Therefore it is he went to Patna and lived in that Ashram. If he had lived long, Sarvodaya work would have been more fruitful than it has been up till now. Unfortunately, the services which he would have rendered to Sarvodaya Movement are lost now. At the present juncture, as the Leader of the House has said, his counsel would have been invaluable, his guidance would have been very great and his help would have been immense. His life is a beaconlight to all to serve this country. Humble as I am, I have been the recipient of many kindness from him. On an invitation from me to preside over a small function at the Sanskrit College, he unvielded the portrait of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and he spoke golden words about that patriot. Even though they might have differed in politics, still he had the large heart and the spirit to appreciate the talent, ability and the services rendered by V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. A great man with a large heart, he sometimes felt that in some matters we were going at a revoluntionary pace. I want to stress that aspect. In spite of the fact that he was one of the leaders

3-30 p.m.

of a revoluntionary movement in the country, still he was a conservative in many important matters. In regard to the fundamental culture of our country and the fundamental Dharma of our country, he felt that we must not break from the past and that we must follow the past. To some extent, there was some slight difference in emphasis between him and Pandit Nehru and even Dr. Radhakrishnan. But still he was there to point out what he felt as one of the foremost man in the country. While he was a conservative, he was there to do service in the great revolutionary movement of liberating the country from the shackles of foreign rule. He was truly a beaconlight to all of us. His services will ever be remembered and India will ever cherish his memory. Generations of our countrymen will always find in his life an example to follow.

Mr. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members will now stand in silence and pass the resolution unanimously.

The Resolution was passed *nem. con.*, all the Members standing in silence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN : The Hon. the Leader of the House will now present the Budget for the year 1963–64. After that, as a mark of respect to the late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the House will adjourn and meet again at 3 p.m. to-morrow.

II.—PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 1963-64.

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : Mr. Chairman, I have the honour to present the Budget Estimates for 1963–64 to this House. In his Budget Speech[a] in the other Chamber this morning the Finance Minister has dealt with the proposals embodied in the Budget in detail. I shall not cover the same ground again, but shall refer, in brief, only to some salient features of the Budget.

2. The Budget Estimates for the next year reveal a deficit of Rs. 2,74 lakhs in spite of the substantial tax effort made in the current year. The assistance from the Centre for Plan Schemes in the next year has been cut by about Rs. 4 crores, and part of this reduction will be on Revenue Account. We have also had to incur considerable additional expenditure on schemes relating to internal security as a result of the National Emergency. The implementation of the Plan is gathering momentum as we enter the third year, and the outlay in the next year has been fixed at about Rs. 59.83 crores.

3. The deficit on Revenue Account is thus due to the combined impact of the National Emergency and the Plan. Even though it is appreciable the Government have decided not to resort to additional taxation in the present Budget. Some of the new measures of taxation introduced in the current year like the tax on motor vehicles and tax on consumption of electricity, have 'built-in' elements of growth and we should get larger revenues from

[a] Printed as Appendix I on pages 57–152.